

Tiny House Regulations in Houston

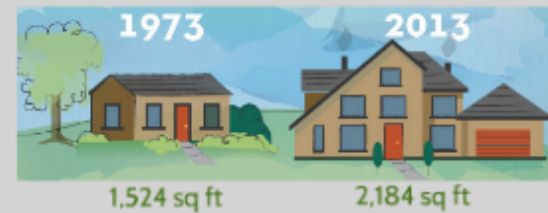
April 22, 2015

Sheila Blake – Code Administrator



THE START OF TINY HOMES

Over the past 40 years, the average size of newly constructed single-family home in Houston has increased by nearly 70%



Average household size continues to decline. In 1970, the average number of household members was 3.48, and in 2010 it was 2.69 people.

Residential Code

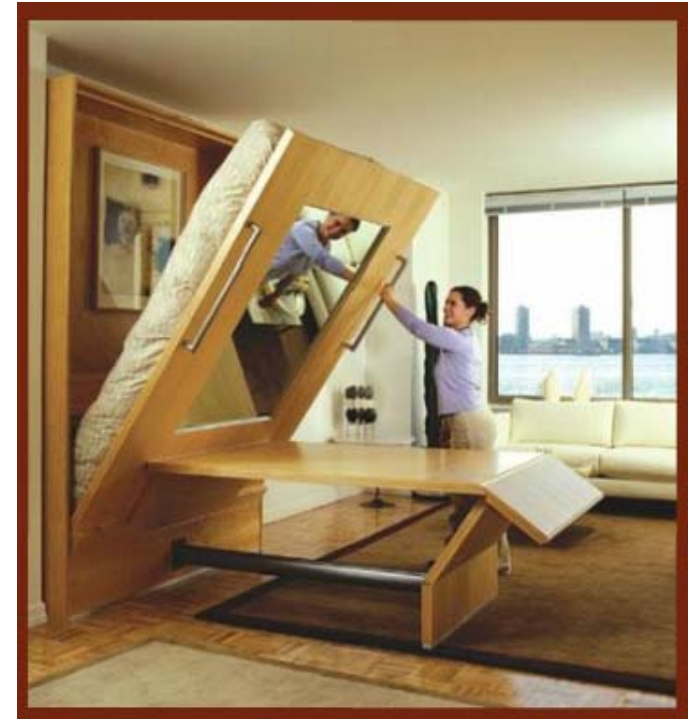
- **DWELLING.** Any building that contains *one or two* dwelling units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for *living purposes*.
- **DWELLING UNIT.** A single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for *living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation*.
- **HABITABLE SPACE.** A space in a building for *living, sleeping, eating or cooking*.
Bathrooms, toilet rooms, closets, halls, storage or utility spaces and similar areas are not considered habitable spaces.



Residential Code

SECTION R304 MINIMUM ROOM AREAS

- **R304.1 Minimum area.** Every dwelling unit shall have at least one habitable room that shall have not less than 120 square feet (11 m²) of gross floor area.
- **R304.2 Other rooms.** Other habitable rooms shall have a floor area of not less than 70 square feet (6.5 m²). **Exception:** Kitchens.
- **R304.3 Minimum dimensions.** Habitable rooms shall not be less than 7 feet (2134 mm) in any horizontal dimension. **Exception:** Kitchens.



SECTION R305 CEILING HEIGHT

R305.1 Minimum height. Habitable rooms, hallways, corridors, bathrooms, toilet rooms, laundry rooms and basements shall have a ceiling height of not less than 7 feet (2134 mm). The required height shall be measured from the finish floor to the lowest projection from the ceiling. (Bedroom “furniture “ not regulated)

Residential Code

SECTION R306 SANITATION

- **R306.1 Toilet facilities.** Every dwelling unit shall be provided with a water closet, lavatory, and a bathtub or shower.
- No privacy separation required

Approx. =
30 Square Feet

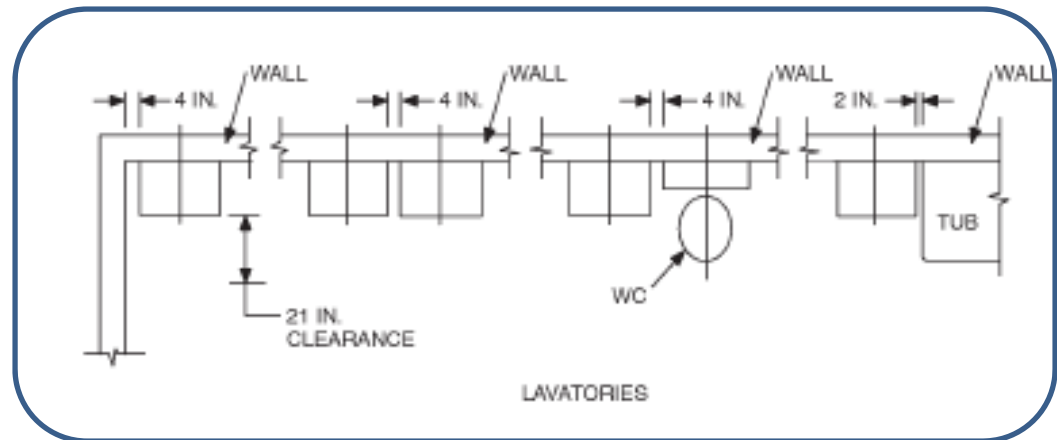
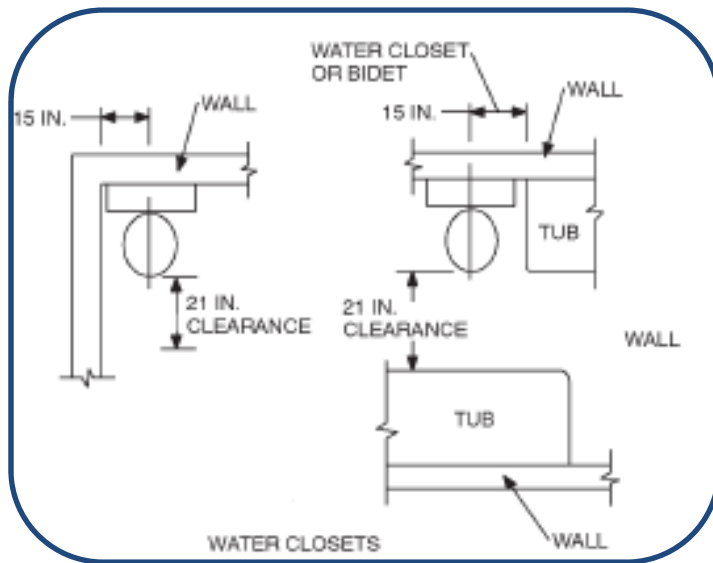
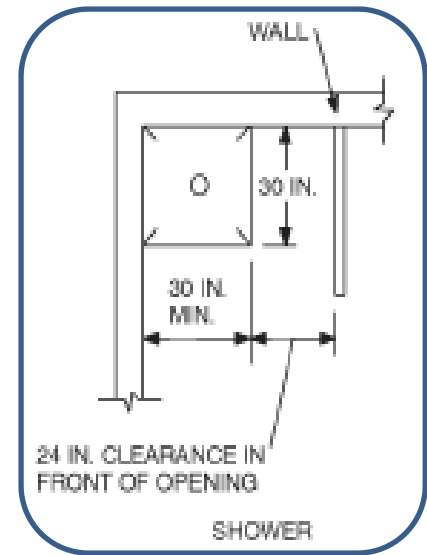


FIGURE R307.1
MINIMUM FIXTURE CLEARANCES

Residential Code / City Code

- DISTANCE TO PROPERTY LINES -3'
- EGRESS OPENINGS FROM BEDROOMS
- STAIRS with HANDRAILS/GUARDS
- UTILITY LETTERS
- FOUNDATIONS
- PARKING – 3 spaces for 2 houses (gravel ok)
- Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing SYSTEMS
- TREES/ LANDSCAPE



Chapter 10 Code of Ordinances

OVERCROWDING (regulated by City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods)

- One room with minimum 150 sq. ft. area for one occupant and minimum 100 sq. ft. area for each additional occupant (2 people = 250 sq. ft.)
- Two rooms with minimum 70 sq. ft. individual sleeping area per occupant, or minimum 50 sq. ft. where more than one in sleeping area. (2 people = 100 sq. ft.)



Chapter 29 Code of Ordinances

- **Travel trailer (regulated by Department of Transportation/ Texas DMV)**

A vehicular, portable structure built on a permanent chassis, designed by the manufacturer to be towed by another vehicle and used as a temporary dwelling, and which meets the definition of "temporary living quarters" or "permanent living quarters" as applicable to its use.

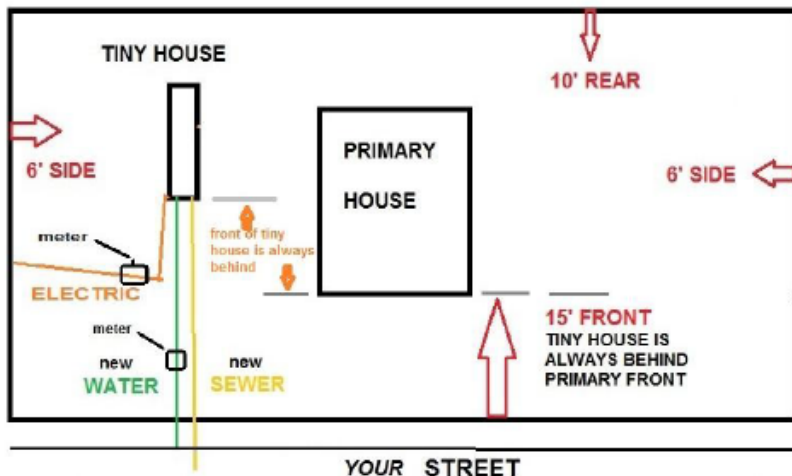
- **Licensed RV Park (regulated by City of Houston Structural Inspections)**

- Development with interior streets
- Recreational areas
- 25' boundary at perimeter
- Tie downs
- Emergency Sanitation
- Utilities
- Fire department access



Chapter 42 Code of Ordinances

- Minimum residential lot size 1400 sq. ft. (avg.)
- Platted Single Family Lot – may have secondary residence up to 900 sq. ft.
(one property owner)
- 25' x 100' lots - can create village with 2 homes each
- Pre-1982 unrestricted lots allow more flexibility
- After 1982 unrestricted reserves
- Deed Restrictions: number of homes , minimum size home, exterior materials
- Restricted blocks set building lines even for unrestricted lots
- Amending Plats can help with issues like lot orientation, not changes
- Plats trigger new rules, density, landscape, park credits ...



Industrialized Housing & Building Pre-Fabricated Homes

Regulated by Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
(TDLR) - Not City of Houston



“**Modular component**” means a structural part of housing or a building constructed at a location other than the building site in a manner that prevents the construction from being adequately inspected for code compliance at the building site without:

- (A) damage; or
- (B) removal and reconstruction of a part of the housing or building.

“**Industrialized housing**” is

- (1) designed for the occupancy of one or more families;
- (2) constructed in one or more modules or constructed using one or more modular components built at a location other than the permanent site; and
- (3) designed to be used as a permanent residential structure when the module or the modular component is transported to the permanent site and erected or installed on a permanent foundation system.

Industrialized housing does not include:

- (1) a residential structure that exceeds three stories or 49 feet in height;
- (2) housing constructed of a sectional or panelized system that does not use a modular component; or
- (3) a ready-built home constructed in a manner in which the entire living area is contained in a single unit or section at a temporary location for the purpose of selling and moving the home to another location.

Building Code – Chapter 17

Certified Fabricators Program for Components: Not Whole Building

- Load bearing structural components like steel, trusses, beams require inspection of every fabricated item unless the manufacturer obtains certification based on either national or city quality control program audit.
- Once registered the individual inspections are not required.
- Updated annually.
- In Houston certified Special Inspectors audit the quality control program.
- City Inspectors check certification numbers on structural components during building construction process.



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New Residential Plan Review

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